

# SYSTEM CONFIGURATION TEAM (SCT)

Meeting Notes  
March 20, 2003

## ***1. Greetings and Introductions.***

The March 20, 2003 meeting of the System Configuration Team was held on March 20, 2003 at the NOAA Fisheries offices in Portland, Oregon. The meeting was chaired by Bill Hevlin of NMFS and facilitated by Richard Forester. The agenda and a list of attendees are attached as Enclosures A and B. Forester led a round of introductions and a review of today's agenda. He also distributed copies of the minutes from the February 20 SCT meeting and asked that any comments on the notes be provided to him as soon as possible.

The following is a summary, not a verbatim transcript, of items discussed at the meeting, together with the actions taken on those items. Please note that some of the enclosures referenced may be too lengthy to routinely include with the meeting notes; copies of these documents may be obtained by contacting Kathy Ceballos at 503/230-5420.

## ***2. FY'03 CRFM Program Funding Shortfall and Discussion of Items to be Reduced or Deferred.***

John Kranda distributed copies of the most recent FY'03 CRFM measures worksheet; he noted that this is one of the most complex and frustrating fiscal years the SCT has ever faced. The fact that we've been in an unfunded continuing resolution for half the year has complicated our situation, Kranda said; we still have not yet received the appropriation Congress made last month, so we don't know how much savings and slippage will be deducted. We're assuming 16% savings and slippage at this point, he said, which means the Corps will have \$71.4 million to work with in initial FY'03 CRFM funding.

The guidance we've received from headquarters is, live within your means, Kranda said – there is no assurance that we will get any of that savings and slippage back this year. We did manage to find \$1.9 million in reprogramming, which gives us \$73.2 million to work with, Kranda added. The two districts have reworked their programs, he said, but we now have sunk costs across the board, and we need to take into account what has already been spent.

Kranda turned to the worksheet (Enc. C), noting that if the SCT continues on its current path, the total cost of the FY'03 CRFM program would be just over \$87 million. We have now managed to scrub that total program down to \$73 million, he said; in order to achieve those cuts, however, we are planning to take a risk and continue with the April-September corner collector

construction contract – that would be a hit on our FY’04 budget if we can’t get back enough savings and slippage, because we would have to pay the \$5 million remaining in that contract, plus interest, before we paid for anything else in FY’04, Kranda said. However, if we didn’t make that assumption, and take that risk, we would have to make much deeper cuts in the FY’03 program.

Kranda then went through the FY’03 CRFM spreadsheet line by line, providing an overview of the cuts the Corps has been forced to make; the group offered a series of clarifying questions and comments. Mark Smith described the changes to the Ice Harbor spill/survival studies, the funding for which is being reduced by about \$350,000; Hevlin and Steve Rainey said NMFS has some questions about the proposed changes to this study. Hevlin said that, in his view, NMFS and the Corps need to schedule an SRWG conference call to resolve the strong differences of opinion on this study. Smith replied that it needs to happen very soon, because the study is scheduled to begin within two weeks. This conference call was set for 1 p.m. Wednesday, March 26.

Other major SCT discussion areas included the reductions to the B2 surface bypass program, the system delayed mortality/multiple bypass evaluation, the system turbine passage survival study, John Day biological studies and the system adult passage study.

The bottom line is that there are a number of programs on which the Corps has decided to push ahead, despite the fact that the funds to complete those contracts may run out in the fourth quarter, Kranda said. If we are able to get savings and slippage restored, we’ll have preserved a \$79 million-\$80 million FY’03 CRFM program, Kranda said. If we can’t get it restored, however, there could be a significant detrimental impact to the FY’04 program -- up to \$7 million in FY’03 obligations that will have to be paid before funds are prioritized in FY’04.

The group then went back through the FY’03 CRFM spreadsheet, identifying the most controversial cuts and deferrals on the list. This list included only two items:

- b Delayed mortality study (Line Item 21) – fall chinook marking – \$1.1 million
- b John Day biological studies (Line Item 47) -- defer summer study – \$1 million

Rock Peters noted that the feasibility of obtaining the needed tags in time to run a 2003 summer study at John Day could be problematic; if it is too late to order the tags, restoring funding to this line-item may be a moot point. If the tags can be ordered, the SCT agreed that restoring funds to the John Day biological studies should be the first priority. The group discussed potential sources of funding for these studies, identifying \$200,000 from Line-Item 52 (McNary temperature control), \$500,000 from line-item 72 (Ice Harbor removable spillway weir), \$800,000 from Line-Item 2 (Bonneville juvenile fish passage studies) and \$700,000 from Line-Item 40 (The Dalles forebay work) as potential sources of funds for the fall chinook marking and John Day summer study. The SCT ranked the line-items potentially slated to be cut as follows:

1. Line-item 52 (definitely cut, lowest-priority)

2. Line-item 72
3. Line-item 2
4. Line-item 40 (highest priority, only cut if absolutely necessary)

Kim Fodrea said that, at this point, Bonneville cannot agree to cut either Line-item 72 or Line-item 40. After a few minutes of discussion, the SCT recommended that the Corps take \$1 million in funding from Line-items 2 and 52 to fund Line-item 47. That's in accordance with what the Corps concluded after a week and a half of intensive discussion, Peters observed. It was further agreed that, if it is not feasible to obtain the tags for Line-item 47, the funds from Line-items 2 and 52 should be transferred to Line-item 21.

The group agreed that there simply isn't enough funding to do both Line-Item 21 and Line-item 47; funding will only be restored to one or the other, depending on the outcome of Peters' inquiry. Peters said he will send out an email to the other SCT participants about Line-item 47's feasibility by tomorrow. David Wills asked that the record reflect that these are some of the most difficult cuts the SCT has had to make, and that none of the SCT's participants is comfortable with having to make these recommendations.

### ***3. Studies Review Work Group (SRWG) Updates.***

This update was deferred until the SCT's April meeting.

### ***4. Fish Facility Design Review Work Group (FFDRWG) Meeting.***

This update was deferred until the SCT's April meeting.

### ***5. FY'04 CRFM Program.***

This update was deferred until the SCT's April meeting.

### ***6. Next SCT Meeting Date.***

The next meeting of the System Configuration Team was set for Friday, April 25 in Portland. Meeting summary prepared by Jeff Kuechle.